



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BRATER LEGISLATION WILL END DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

(LANSING)—State Senator Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) introduced legislation today to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Currently, state and federal laws provide basic legal protection against discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, national origin, or disability, but not sexual orientation or gender identity.

“Today, in 37 states, including Michigan, you can be fired from your job because of who you are, not how hard you work or how well you do your job,” said Brater. “Our state should no longer stand for this kind of intolerance.”

Brater’s bill will amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, passed in Michigan in 1976. In addition to the attributes included in federal legislation, the Elliot-Larsen Act also prohibits discrimination on the basis of height, weight, familial status, or marital status. Legislation to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has been introduced in the previous two legislative sessions but neither bill made it out of committee.

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“It is time for legislators in Michigan to act,” said Brater. “It is not enough to say that we’re representing all the people of this state if there are some people who are categorically denied equal rights and equal protection. We should join states such as Wisconsin, New York, and Minnesota, which have already acted to end discrimination based on sexual orientation. I hope my Senate colleagues will take a stand for equality in our state.”

Senator Brater’s legislation, along with a bill to prohibit felonious intimidation based on sexual orientation and gender identity, sponsored by Senator Virg Bernero (D-Lansing), and a bill outlining appropriate sentencing guidelines for felonious intimidation, introduced by Senator Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), offer a comprehensive approach to protecting the rights and lives of members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

Senator Liz Brater represents Senate District 18, which includes the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, the Villages of Barton Hills, Chelsea, and Dexter and the following Townships: Ann Arbor, Augusta, Dexter, Freedom, Lima, Lyndon, Northfield, Salem, Scio, Sharon, Superior, Sylvan, Webster, and Ypsilanti. She is the minority vice chair of the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism Committee. In February 2003, Senator Brater was appointed by Governor Granholm to serve on the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council.

Editor’s Note: Sen. Brater’s most recent photo is available for download at the following link: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/Graphics/pressphotos/SD18BraterPortrait.jpg>

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